

Copied from a typed document headed: **C.B. Berryman, 1983**

My name is Constance Boyd Berryman, the eldest of the three daughters of H. Aubrey Hall and his wife Helen Rose, nee Lodge. I was born in Roe's Cottage, Roebourne, in August 1912 (9th), Dr John Maunsell attending. He refused to give chloroform to Mother despite the poor young thing's plea.

The shell of Roe's Cottage still stands, near the old State School and across the road from the Hospital. By its front entrance, skilfully traced in mortar upon the stone wall, are a champagne bottle, glass and cork.

My great-grand parents, the Halls, Leakes and Lazenbys were all very early settlers in W.A. by my Lodge great-grand parents stayed firmly in London. Their youngest son, Thomas Soutter Lodge, came out here in a sailing ship, the *Lady Elizabeth* in 1878, and was in the rest of my family's view, a very late comer.

Our first home that I remember clearly was on Jarman Island, where my father had a job as a Light House Keeper. My sister Margaret was born in 1915 and her health was affected by the inland heat (Croydon Station), so it was thought that a change to the island would help her. It was a lovely place a few miles out from Cossack (see 'Western Heritage, ptt 2, by Ray and John Oldham, 1980, page 17).

The light house and quarters were completed in 1888. Every breeze was cool, the beach was clean and sandy, and fish and oysters abounded. The quarters were handsome, built of stone, for two families, and the other occupant was Mr Langer, a German. To prevent us two children from intruding upon Mr Langer, Mother drew a chalk line upon the verandahs and told us not to go beyond them. And we didn't. There was no water on the Island, so big cement underground tanks were installed to catch the run-off from the rain on the roof. When the lid was opened there was a scurry of large nor' west cockroaches, but there was no way of getting rid of them. The year was about 1916, and it suddenly dawned upon the law that here was a German subject in a fine location for getting in touch with submarines, and a posse descended upon the island and bore Mr Langer off, very dramatically. Father's brother, Ernest, joined us for the rest of our term, a very happy arrangement. We all loved the Island. When our family sailed in our little dinghy to do the shopping in Cossack, a large old turtle frequently kept us company for a mile or two. Margaret flourished in the comparative coolness and was healthy thereafter.

We next lived on Andover Station (the first station in the area which was started by my grandfather, Shakespeare Hall on behalf of John Wellard in 1863) in a small house of wood and iron. The kitchen was well away, at the end of a path, with a little bridge over a gully in the middle. In 1917 I went to live in Busselton with my Lodge grandparents -- to provide company and distraction for them whilst

their only son, Robert John Lodge was away at the World War -- and when I returned north in 1920, we moved to a cottage next to the State School in Roebourne. It was of wood and iron and consisted of a front verandah a 'parlor', two bedrooms, a back verandah where we had our meals, and a detached kitchen -- this last was a precaution against fire. In 1900 the Lodgej's home was burnt out on a farm near Beverley when a kitchen caught fire, and then spread to the adjacent house. Before the fire and after the fire were like 'B.C.' and 'A.D.' in our family. A feature of this roebourne house was its murals. An itinerant artist painted very vivid pictures in the 'parlor', one of a buxom girl in a tight dress and knee high button boots, perched on the tail of a bi-plane, is the one I remember clearly.

I think we had piped water; there was no electricity (the Victoria Hotel was lit with carbide gas, which has a peculiar smell). No postman, tho' there was a fine stone Post Office, still in use. there were a butcher's shop, three hotels -- *The Victoria*, *Jubilee* (we were all monarchists) and *The Roebourne*. Dalgetys, managed by Ronald Glen, had groceries and agencies and station requirements, and See Sing & Co., managed by our friend Fong Fulson, was a groccry. He was always so kind to us children, and the shop was a fascinating place with a wonderful spicy aroma all its own. Sun Kan Long was a tailor, in a tiny house near the river. There was a Japanese shop in Cossack, owned and run, along with their pearling business, by Jiro and T. Muramats, and we bought our supplies there when we lived at the old Hall house in Cossack (corner Douglas Stree and the The Strand, Lot I16 from time to time. Cossack also at one time had two hotels, *The Weld* (after a Governor) and *The White Horse* (nearly opposite the wharf). Roebourne also boasted a cool drink factory, owned by Mr Bickerton, who made deliveries from an old car. Sanitation depended on a man with a cart and horse, who also came down to Cossack on Saturday afternoons. There was a baker, but how or if we had fresh milk I forget. I know we used a great deal of condensed milk (powdered milk was far away in the future then) and this I disliked very much.

Most things were bought on credit, a habit that persisted until the outbreak of World War II. When I went to work in an accountant's office in Carnarvon in 1928 I was astonished at the lists of bad debts and slow payers, all together in the back of the ledgers.

Boans and Bairds were the main firms in Perth to whom we sent mail orders, and their catalogues were wonderfully useful. We children cut out the pictures with Mother's nail scissors, or coloured them in, or looked at the lovely city clothes. When ordering shoes for us, Mother drew an outline of the soles of our feet on a piece of paper. Eventually the catalogues ended their careers in the lavatory at the end of the yard.

Because of the climate there were no market gardens and all our fruit and vegetabales came from Perth by boat (except at Mr Satirist where we had a beautiful vegetable garden in winter, watered by the aboriginal girls). [Note from H.M.W. -- The girls pulled carrots and put the 'heads' back.] I

cannot understand why no one grew tropical fruit then. In Carnarvon in 1930 there was but one mango tree, belonging to Frank Dawson of the dairy farm on the Gascoyne River.

Some of the stations had good gardens, where the natives did the watering with buckets. Pumpkins and melons were a great standby. In this arid district (Roebourne) there was a paradise, Millstream Station in the Tableland, owned by Cookson Bros. and managed by Mr Claud Irvine. We were there in 1921, and played endlessly in the bath house, a reed hut built over a stream, the floor of large flagstones, where, unless watched, your soap or face cloth floated gaily away. There were small fish to watch and endeavour to catch in the crystal clear water. Bananas grew abundantly. It was a different world.

My father was very diet conscious. We ate mutton or beef (no lamb ever was eaten) with the occasional and welcome brush turkey or kangaroo tail -- the latter made a delicious stew, when the tail was skinned you could see the long fine sinews that the natives pulled out and used as string before the white man came. We have an ancient yandi which has been mended neatly with sinew. It was also used to fasten the handle onto a stone axe, held in place by gum from a eucalypt.

We had the inevitable potatoes and onions from Perth, pumpkins, and all manner of dried beans, peas and fruit; these were first soaked and then boiled until soft. The only cool place for food was a Coolgardie safe. It had a metal frame with hessian sides and a large shallow container of water on top. From this, towelling pieces dipped in the water kept the sides damp and consequent evaporation cooled the inside. In summer we used 'Chinese Jell', gelatine in long straws, because it set even in the hot weather, when ordinary packet jelly was useless. All these things had to be kept in containers, away from mice and the awful cockroaches. Weevils in the flour had to be sieved out, the sugar became lumpy, blow flies were a constant threat to the meat, especially when it was cooked (when I complained of weevils in the porridge, my father said, 'Don't complain, they are only oatmeal in another form'). The meat we ate fresh for the first day, then father corned what was left. He did this very well. Despite the present dislike of the use of salt in cooking, because of danger to the heart, my father was a very healthy man still when he died at the age of 91.

Hurricane lamps were the electric torches of the time. They were filled with kerosene; it took a very strong wind indeed to blow them out. Reading and 'house' lamps were of metal, china or glass, sometimes very prettily decorated, or were pressure lamps. These last were hot to sit by and attracted a great many moths, but they gave an excellent light.

All the stoves and fire-places were fuelled by wood, mainly snake wood in the north. If the stove was out or the kettle cold most people lit the primus, which burned kerosene and heated comparatively quickly. I still have one in case the power goes off in my all-electric house in Perth.

The old jail still stands in Roebourne. the inmates were mainly black, and how they must have sickened behind those high walls for their own lands and their own people. If they escaped and were not locals, they stood a very fair chance in the earlier days of being killed for trespass. They did all the road work, even tho' they were often chained to their shovels or wheelbarrows. If you can, see the photograph on p.102 of 'Yeera-muk-a-doo' by Nancy Withnell Taylor. I never heard of anyone protesting.

In 1920 land transport was still powered mainly by horses and camels. My father had a good buggy and pair, riding and pack horses when in 1921 he drove around the local stations inspecting [re-appraising HMW] for the Lands Department. [The original reports were lost within the Lands Department and some years ago the H.A. Hall reports were gratefully copied. HMW] Cars were in evidence in town, but the inland roads were often too rough for them. Wool and stores were carried on horse, camel or donkey wagons. They were so slow. (Some stations in the Carnarvon district still sent their wool by camel team in 1929.) A well-known teamster in Roebourne was 'Treacle Dick', supposedly so-named because he fed his men on bread and treacle.

The State Shipping Service and the Alfred Holt Line [Adelaide Steamship HMW] provided the North West coast with the necessities and luxuries of life, and were a wonderful way of travelling on our long looked for holidays. The joys of the comfortable little cabins, the cleanliness and the lack of dust, the delicious meals, the fruit -- one forgets the rough trips. In the Wireless Officer's cabin in 1920 I heard my very first broadcast, through earphones, a magic moment. I can just remember the 'Bambra'. she was a German ship, a prize of war, and a few German labels were still over the doorways. The Koombana' was lost before the Great War in a terrible hurricane, and to my ear the name still has the sound of doom, from listening to the hushed tones of the grown-ups remembering the friends lost so suddenly. No trace of her hull has ever been found.

Newspapers: there was a district newspaper 'The Northern Times', and we subscribed to the old 'Western Mail', with its shiny centre section devoted to photographs of racegoers, stud cattle and noteworthy marriages. Grandfather Lodge was wonderfully good in posting on the marvellous English periodicals he received from his sisters At Home --- The Illustrated London News, Tatler, Bystander, The Field, bound copies of the English dailies with the comic strip of Pip, Squeak and Wilfred, Punch with its excellent cartoons. But the greatest joy to me was 'The Sphere'. My great-Uncle Robert John Lodge gave Mother a subscription as a wedding present in 1910, and we received a weekly issue until about 1926 or 1927. It covered the exciting finding of the tomb of Tutankhamen, with reconstructions by F. Matania of how the young King could have looked in life, and I read every reference there was of this exotic event. Later on, at Satirist on the edge of the desert, I knew all the

great names on the London stage, read the reviews of the best new books, and gazed at the society pages with keen interest! I knew far more about London than about Perth.

Our holidays were few and far between. The trip to the Tableland, where we stayed with the Irvines at Millstream, the Andrews at Mount Florence and the Cusacks at Tamabrey, was a lovely break for Mother and for us. To go South by boat was comparatively expensive; we went in 1919 and next in 1924. In 1925 we moved to Carnarvon and were able to go away more often.

We had no floods, fire or famine, just drought. Education was a problem. I was eight and Margaret five, when we had the chance to attend classes at Mrs Thompson's along with some friends (in Roebourne). It was our first school, and there were about a dozen of us. My father had me do pot-hooks on a slate and my grandfather Lodge had taught me to read and print, but I don't think Margaret had done even that. We stayed a year or so and at least learned to read and write fairly well.

Mount Satirist, 1922-1924

In 1922 we moved out to Mt Satirist (I think the Station was called after a race horse) which Father was to manage for M.H.R. Sleeman of the copper mine at Whim Creek. [The previous Manager had been killed when struck by lightning at the homestead. HMW] About the only difference between the conditions of the early pioneers and ourselves was that we had a telephone six miles away and the mail and perishables came once a fortnight in Bob Brooker's old tourer. We cooked in the same way, with big, heavy iron pots (you scraped them clean with a wire brush) on a wood stove, our transport was wholly horsedrawn, no radio, the laundry was a small tin room with the copper outside and the tubs were big oval metal ones. Disposing of the water was easy -- the tubs were tipped over outside. A good deal of the time the native women did our laundry and sometimes the washing up. I remember them as a very pleasant cheerful bunch. I don't know how they managed it, but there were very few children in the camp, in fact I remember only three -- Jilgie, Perey and Florrie. We were never allowed to play with them because of the risk of eye infection. We used to get 'bung eyes' when a fly bit us on the eye lid. The eye closed completely because of the swelling, and there was no treatment, only wait until the swelling abated. When we woke in the mornings our eye lashes were often covered with dried discharge. I found it odd that when I spent a year in Port Hedland in 1973 I never saw a swollen eye on blacks or whites.

The only corroboree that I ever saw was one at the camp on the bank of the Peewah Creek to which we were invited. At night, we could hear the songs and the clicking sticks before the camp settled down to sleep. Music meant so much to the natives.

We often had a Station cook, mainly Chinese. One was Wong Sick, who was kind to us children. One birthday cake was resplendant with three tiers, all iced and on top a wonderful dome, iced in

bright yellow. Investigation found this last to be a very large onion whose icing was coloured with curry powder. When there was no cook, Mother had to take over.

One stationhand we had was the only Jew I ever heard of working on a station. He was Sydney Saffer, a pleasant young man who didn't stay very long. Once he and Mother had a disagreement over religion, and he offended her very much by saying that we wouldn't have had a religion if it hadn't been for the Jews. Soon afterwards it was Christmas and Mother decided to end the disagreement as nicely as she could. Syd responded by showing her his prayer rug and peace reigned once more.

Another man was Tommy Abdullah, a very bright young person. Once when he was camped out he sent in a list of stores needed, and as he couldn't write he drew details of the labels 'average contents 60' was easy but UFORES stumped us -- it was BURFORDS, a popular brand of soap. [We still have his drawings. HMW]

Twice a year our parents spent hours making up the stores list -- sacks of flour and sugar, cases of tea, jam, dried vegetables and fruit, condensed milk, lots of tomato sauce. Mr Sleeman provided the staples of our food but condiments we paid for. One summer Father bought a case of tinned fruit, another time we had a case of cool drinks, both such memorable purchases. Our stores came out from Roebourne in wagons. Once the team consisted of donkeys, with horses [?mules HMW] in the shafts, because the donkeys were too small. Alongside their working mothers were the delightful foals, teetering along on their long legs like ballet dances. Another wagon was pulled by camels. I was frightened of them, remembering Father's tale of the drunk who went to pat one and it bit his scalp off. My hair still prickles.

In the background always were the natives, working for their food and ginna-ginnas/dresses -- a shoe was a ginna booka, a dress for a foot, and little cahs.

As well as the workers there were their fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles to be fed. They built their own shelters, except for Yowie and Manghil who had a small room of corrugated iron. They were the parents of Florrie. Three times a day they lined up at a hatch in the kitchen, to receive enamel plates of meat and potatoes and bread or damper, with a pint pot of very sweet black tea. I think aboriginals 'go walkabout' at intervals because they need a change from such a diet.

My father spoke the Nguluma [Ngalooma HMW] dialect fluently (his vocabulary of it was published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra) and enjoyed their company.

Mt Satirist was at the end of the mail route and we had very few visitors. In two and a half years we had encounters twice with other children -- the Stanleys of Yandyarra, and one wonderful Christmas

with our cousins at Sherlock Station. We went to Mallina Station, managed by Mr and Mrs Archie Campbell, a few times, and we had occasional visits from Mr and Mrs Sleeman. Mrs Sleeman was from another world -- she came from Sydney and was so well dressed and amusing. All summer long at Whim Creek she spent the hot hours of the day in an old adit [sic] at the mine, which had not been worked for years.

This was a very difficult time for our Mother. Father was away from the homestead most days and she was dreadfully lonely. Our callers were mostly men and she longed for women's company and for her parents and the old family home at Busselton. The north in those comfortless days was hard on the women. Children weren't so affected, perhaps because they live from day to day.

Two regular visitors were Major J.W. Wray of the Salvation Army, and Archdeacon H.W. Simpson of the Anglican Church. The latter toured his enormous parish on a battered motor cycle with, instead of a side car, a flat slab for his luggage and his previous violin. He played this very well and a taste of real music was exhilarating.

During our two and a half years at Satirist we had very little rain and the plight of the stock was terrible. The working horses and the house cows had to be fed on chaff and oats brought up from the south and cost was great. Some mornings the men had to heave the older cows onto their feet, they were so weak. At the worst of the drought the poor sheep weren't worth killing for meat, and we had a good deal of kangaroo, which did better, perhaps because they could range further from the eaten out watering points.

All the work of the station was done with horses. We had two pairs who were kept for the big buggy, Rocket and Roman, and Bachelor and Fife-and-Drum. Sadly Bachelor fell into a well while looking for water, and was found dead. In the winter Father sometimes took us for picnics to Station Peak, the abandoned gold mine about six miles away. Here in a shed was a telephone line, that somehow remained intact until it reached Croydon Station and contact with Roebourne. We were too scared to explore the mine workings, but there was all the equipment and the men's quarters left behind when the mine became useless and which apparently was not worth selling. If only old bottles had been as valuable then as now....

The homestead was a tin building of three bedrooms and a living room with a verandah all round. The floors were of cement, almost flat on the ground, and the bathroom was a very large old round tank, with a door and a window cut into it. It was extremely hot in there during the day. We filled the bath with water early in the morning before it had heated in the pipes and used it as we needed to. At midday in summer the water in the pipes was unbearably hot.

By the back door was the big Coolgardie safe, and along the verandah was the water bag for drinking. This came in two shapes, both made with canvas. The better one was a cylinder with a small wooden tap at the base and a lid to keep off the dust. The other was a square board with a larger square of canvas whose corners were nailed or screwed to the wooden corners, making four spouts. (I have tried quite unsuccessfully to draw this.) Both types were suspended from a rafter. It was a crime to let the bag become empty. When the men went out working for the day they had specially shaped water bags on straps fastened around the horses' necks. The water didn't taste so good, but it was cool. It seemed to me that the best thirst quencher in the bush was hot black trea, which we children weren't allowed to drink.

The lavatory was situated about 100 yards from the house, on the far side of the road in. It was a simple affair, a wood and iron erection over a small mining shaft, which looked very deep and dangerous to a child. A kerosene tine of sieved ashes was for disinfecting the contents of the shaft and the paper was whatever publication was read and discarded. I remember once searching frantically for the last line of the jokes in an issue of 'The Humourist'. I don't remember seeing proper toilet paper in use until about 1928, and septic tanks were unknown in Roebourne when we were there.

While at the station it was suddenly decided that it was time we children should have some more schooling, and Mother wrote off to the Education Department in Perth for correspondence lessons. I was 11, Margaret 8 and Joan 4 when these momentous packages arrived and we embarked upon the 3 R's once again. Mother was too busy to teach us much, but we were bright students and soon managed to do a fortnight's lessons in a week.

At the end of 1924 Mother and we three went South for a long holiday, starting with Christmas at Busselton at our grandparent's home with cousins, aunts and uncles gathered under that dear old roof. Afterwards we took the train up to Perth to a furnished house in Leake Street, Peppermint Grove; and went to school at Cottrilsoe where I, a 12 year old was in third class (4th grade now). The Head Master then was Mr Orr, a very strict man, and my adored teacher was Miss Cherry Jackson, pretty and kind and so helpful. I was happy there, and stayed on when Mother and the other two went up to Beverley to visit.

In January 1925, while we were away, a hurricane tore in from the sea and at Satirist mills, fencing, sheds, were wrecked, and many of the poor stock were drowned. The rain would mean plenty of feed, but it was too late. Father left the Station and when we returned North it was to join him in Cossack, where his bachelor brother lived in the comfortable house our Hall grandfather built in the 1870's. Father had had to pack all our gear by himself, and it duly arrived safely in Cossack in a donkey wagon. Shifting us was no light matter, as in addition to domestic articles there were our books -- 25

large volumes of The Encyclopaedia Britannica in its own case, Burke's Landed Gentry and Burke's Peerage, two volumes of Fairbairns Book of Crests, 20 volumes of the Century Dictionary, as well as history, poetry and fiction. We had a large mangle to top all. It weighed about 4 hundredweight and was always referred to by my Uncle as 'The Curse of the Halls'.

Cossack was no longer the busy port it had been before it silted up and was replaced by the good jetty at Point Samson, but after the quiet station life we were very happy to see and play with old friends again. The Hall house has vanished [Father dismantled the quite extensive buildings after his brother's death (in 1941) because he feared vandalism in the deserted town. HMW] but if you are looking around you may find a cement block upon which the stove once stood, and a few blue and white beads. These were on long strings which hung at doors and windows to keep the flies out, and their gentle clicking is in my mind's ear when I remember Cossack.

My Father loved the little town, which in his youth had been busy and quite prosperous. In the lay off season of the pearling fleet the sand hills at the back of town, towards Point Samson, were full of natives, several hundred of them at the peak of the trade. My husband and I visited Cossack in the 1970's and found our way to where the camps had been, and to our delight found a stone grinding outfit.

Any account of our life in the North must include father's double cousin Ernest Anderton Hall and his wife Winifred, daughter of the Frank Smalpages, always known to us as Cousin Ernest and Cousin Winnie. They had four children about our ages and we got along very well. Cousin Winnie had a beautiful contralto voice and was an accomplished pianist, as well as a wonderful housekeeper. They were both such warm, friendly, welcoming people. E.A.H. was a short, square man, with a big moustache, and in his youth had been a great rider at race meetings, and a wrestler. In my time he was a wonderful spinner of yarns -- oral history was made for him, but too late, alas -- and it was such a pleasure on warm nights to sit outside and hear his tales of the early days. Like the time he and his cousin Reg Hester were exploring inland from Port Hedland, and one night the Natives took too much interest in their doings, so they took it in turns to keep watch, at a distance from their camp fire, and Reg suddenly started to snore. Cousin's voice would sink to a whisper and we listened spellbound. And the time he wrestled with a boastful Afghan and won, then very prudently left town in case the rest of the Afghans came looking for him. And the time he brought a mob of sheep down to Geraldton overland when he reached town a friend warned him not to take a cheque, the new owners were 'broke'. They duly came with their cheque to take delivery, but E.A.H. played the simple yokel and declared the only money he handled was gold. He got it too, eventually. At various times he owned Yandarra, Croydon and Sherlock Stations in the Roebourne district, until in the early 1920's he sold Sherlock and moved to Wooramel Station about 80 miles south of Carnarvon.

This seems a good place to tell of: Christmas at Sherlock, 1923.

The cousins asked us to spend this Christmas with them, and E.A.H. arrived in his car to pick us up. He had a good, large homestead, built of cement to frustrate the white ants and there was heaps of room for our beds on the wide verandahs. We had a wonderful time with Gwyn, Henty, Theo and Reg and the four McCamey children -- their father was the overseer. On Christmas Eve there was a great surge of preparation for food. We went out to Wandy[?Yandy]-wok-arena pool and the men netted fish and shot ducks and perhaps wild turkeys. These were brought home for the native women to scale, clean and pluck, which they did with much enthusiasm and laughter. A young pig was slaughtered and baked whole. Next morning we had a Christmas Tree, the first that I ever remember, and we eleven children had a most exciting time. I for some reason thought the Boys' Own Annual was for me, so lovely and fat and readable, but it wasn't. (I read every word of it anyway.) The main serial was 'The Treasure of the Incas'. I had a beautifully dressed baby doll, dear Annabelle who is still around, minus her legs. Then we eleven were lined up on the back verandah and Cousin came along with a bottle of Eno's Fruit Salts and a jug of water, to ensure a clean start for the day. (I'm glad it wasn't my father -- his idea of a clean start was a spoonful of Castor Oil, one of the most revolting substances known to man.) We had watermelon to keep us going until lunch, which was a hot one in the best English tradition.

To appreciate the day properly you should have lived on Satirist for a while. We returned home at the end of the week, to find that the pet kangaroo had been dozing under Mother's bed when she shut the door to go away, but it was still alive. It had eaten a good deal of paper and had managed to get at the water in the big jug on Mother's wash stand.

We left Cossack at the end of 1925, and at first went to Wooramel for a year or so [three years, HMW], then came in to Carnarvon. I boarded at the Presentation Convent first, then my sisters came as day scholars when Father got work in Carnarvon. I remember with affection and gratitude Mother Joseph, Mother Aloysius, Sister Agnes, Sister Augustine, Sister Magdalen, Sister Teresa, Sister M. Xavier, who gave me so much above the call of duty.